

AWM4

**Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War**

Machine Guns

Item number: 24/21/4

Title: 21st Australian Machine Gun
Company

April 1917



AWM4-24/21/4

WAR DIARY

1599
Army Form C. 2118.

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

or
~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.~~

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the Field	1/4/17		Cold & rainy day. Church Parade under Chaplain M ^C KENZIE (1 ST AUS. INF. BDE.) at 11-30 A.M. R.C. Church Parade at BUIRE 10 P.M.	
	2/1/17		Gave in one blanket per man to Ordnance. Morning musketry & revolver practice, every man fired 10 rounds S.A.A & revolver men 6 shots each Afternoon packed limbers in order to move early in morning	
	3/11/17		Marched out at 0945 first receiving from Town Major DERNANCOURT ^{critically} that all billets were left in a clean condition. Roads extremely muddy but not much traffic. Arrived at billets at MONTAUBAN at 12.30 P.M. Orders received at 11-30 P.M for tomorrow's march.	
	4/4/1917		Reveille 0530 - Marched out from MONTAUBAN at 0910 after a severe march in rain, sleet, hail, & snow arrived at FREMICOURT at 4-30 P.M. Transport travelled via CONTALMAISON & main ALBERT - BAPAUME road. Animals in open, men in ruined houses &c.	

WAR DIARY

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696
Army Form C. 2118.

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the Field	5/4/17.		Reconnitred in morning Corps Main Line of Resistance. In right Brigade sector two sections (8 guns) were placed by 4 P.M. - Afternoon reconnitred left reserve sector & by 8 P.M. the remaining two sections (Numbers One & Three were in position) one gun per section (four in all) are mounted by day for anti aircraft work.	
	6/4/17		Arose at 0330 in order to see the Company at "stand to". Found everything correct. Changed several positions in left sector in afternoon as considered positions chosen yesterday were capable of improvement. Heavy rain at night.	
	7/4/17.		Morning rode round positions on right. Then visited D.H.Q. & have them dispositions of all guns. Afternoon attended Conference at 1st Aus. Inf Bde HQ where instructions were received for operations to take place on night 8/9 April. The C.S.M. (FIRNIE A.G.) went to England to join an officers cadet battalion.	

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118. 1799

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the Field	8/17 9/4/17		<p>Conferred with O.C. 1st Aust. M.G. Co regarding our two right sections acting as a reserve tonight. Arranged to loan the 1st Company 8 pack mules to help carry S.A.A up to a forward dump. Satisfied myself at 8 P.M. that all was in readiness everyone knew their respective jobs.</p> <p>Met the two right sections at mid-night, took them across to VELU WOOD where they were to hold themselves in readiness for eventualities. Two fighting limbers per section were all ready harnessed up. Reported to 1st Bde H.Q. at 3-0 A.M.</p> <p>Operations by First Aus. Inf. Bde successful, HERMIES & DEMICOURT being taken. Third Aus. Inf. Bde. captured BOURSIES all villages were taken after some fighting.</p> <p>Afternoon reconnoitred positions in vicinity of LAGNICOURT all officers interested (left sector) also visited positions Nos. 2 & 4 Sections who were in reserve at VELU WOOD were not required but are still remaining in case of counterattacks.</p>	

WAR DIARY

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Army Form C. 2118.

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In McField	10/4/17		<p>visited Divisional HQ at 9-30 A.M. Received orders to withdraw Numbers Two + Four Sections - they to go in their old positions in Corps Main Line of Resistance for one night & to be relieved next day by the 2nd Aus. Inf. M. G. Co. Took O.C. 2nd Company this officers round all the positions. Afternoon despatched Numbers One & Three Sections to positions in vicinity of LAGNICOURT. Direct fire can be obtained on QUÉANT at 2400 yards. Two guns are mounted by day for firing at hostile aircraft.</p> <p>With Nos. 2. & 4. Section Officers made a careful reconnaissance of the right brigade Reserve Line & before dark placed eight guns in position therein. Reported to Brigade of their dispositions at night very heavy snow storm.</p>	
	11/4/17			

WAR DIARY

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1918
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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the field	12 4 17		<p>Morning placed four LEWIS guns of 1st Aust. Pioneer Battalion (attached to this unit) in positions for firing at and hostile aircraft. These guns were placed near the D.A.C, refilling points, & vicinity of Divisional Head Quarters. Afternoon visited guns of No 3 Section near LAGNICOURT - found every thing correct.</p>	
	13 4 17		<p>Company paid today. Changed H.Q. of Company from FREMICOURT to DELSAUX FARM.</p>	
	14 4 17		<p>Morning visited the Brigade Reserve Line on left ^{right} - Some emplacements were fitted with overhead cover but were conspicuous. Arranged to have wire-netting sent up to make camouflage. Night visited left sector, & saw all guns in vicinity of LAGNICOURT. Very quiet night, hardly any shelling.</p>	

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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996

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Reference Map France 57^c

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the Field	15 4 17.		<p>At 3-30 A.M. heavy hostile shelling was developed against the villages in rear of our front line & against our battery positions. It was especially severe against HERMIES, DEMICOURT, BOURSIES, LAGNICONAT, MORCHIES, & their vicinities. At 4-00 AM the enemy attacked along our whole front in great force. On our right Brigade front the attack was made in greatest strength against HERMIES but was repulsed with very heavy loss to the enemy, 150 dead being counted on one Company's front alone. Further north our troops were forced to give ground by sheer weight of numbers after inflicting severe casualties. On our left Brigade front the Company on the extreme left which was holding a frontage of 1000 yards with three platoons in the line, after putting up a strenuous resistance found itself attacked in both front & rear owing to the enemy having broken through the troops on its left flank. The three platoons were overwhelmed. The support platoon resisted the enemy in Sq. C 18 A until the attack worked round its flank & rear. This Company lost between 60% & 70% of its effectives. The Company on its right, although surrounded on three sides through the same cause held its ground & continued to punish the enemy severely.</p>	REF. MAP FRANCE 57 ^c

WAR DIARY

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the Field (Cont'd)	15 4 17		<p>The Division on our left formed a defensive flank facing EAST & covering NOREWIL. The attackers moved through the gap, swung to the SOUTH & captured LAG NICOURT. Through the extreme left company of infantry being overwhelmed a before stated the four guns of Number Three Section of this unit were surrounded by the enemy - three of the guns were captured also one officer (2/Lt. H. JOHNSON) & 18 other ranks. The sub-section officer (2/Lt. N. MARTIN) & 8 other ranks & one gun escaped mainly through the devoted action of Pte. ERBACHER who slinging his gun round fired a belt into the grey of the enemy, at 15 paces compelling him to ground. As others worked round his flanks with bombs he disabled his gun & made a bolt for it luckily escaping. The before mentioned sub section officer after getting clear of gathered scattered elements of our infantry & organized a counter</p>	

WAR DIARY

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~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.~~

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the Field (Continued)	15 17		<p><i>attack</i> which was successful in driving the enemy back. He rushed forward, ahead of the infantry, to our old gun position with his revolver surprised & took prisoner twelve Germans. No trace was there, however, of either the three missing guns or personnel except one of our dead (PTE. BRYANT) & about fifteen to twenty dead Germans. One of our guns which was mounted by night at C29A.08 & used for anti aircraft work by day, inflicted very heavy casualties on the enemy as they attempted to come over the ridge in C22D & C23C - This same gun was the means of saving several field guns from being demolished by the enemy about C23 Central - The Numbers One & Two rushed their gun out into the open & brought accurate fire to bear scattering the Germans in all directions & allowing our infantry to rush forward & recapture the guns. Another gun located at D19B in a position in rear of the outpost line fired nine belts at direct targets enabling the outposts to fall back on a previously prepared position - the infantry, in their turn, by covering fire allowed the gun, crew & gun to also retire back</p>	<p>REF. MAP FRANCE 57^c</p>

A7092). Wt. W12839/M1292 750.poc. 1/17. D. D & L., Ltd. Forms/C2118/14.

WAR DIARY

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the field (Cont.?)	15 4 17		<p>to the same alignment - Our remaining guns being in the Brigade Reserve Line were not in action. All lost ground was regained & heavy losses inflicted on the enemy - over 1000 dead being counted along our divisional front.</p> <p>Chief lessons from a Machine gunners point of view is that the ideal outpost weapon is the LEWIS gun while the MACHINE GUN has once more proved that, in capable hands, the most effective weapon in support reserve line, for smashing an attack in force.</p>	
- do -	16 4 17		<p>Two more LEWIS guns attached to this unit for duty. Saw C.O. 1st Aust. Pioneer Bn. regarding same. Moved my most forward gun from right front of LAGNICOURT to a position some 500 yards further to rear - a LEWIS gun being substituted thereupon. Also emplaced another gun previously doing Anti Aircraft work in a position to command rear left flank of LAGNICOURT.</p>	
- do -	17 4 17		<p>Morning visited left sector guns (4) & reported to HQ 5th Aus. Inf. Bn. also 2nd Aus. Inf. Bde HQ. & gave them our dispositions.</p> <p>Heavy rain & suns rendering roads muddy & across country heavy.</p>	

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the Field	18/4/17		<p>Morning visited Right sector guns (8); Impressed on the Officer the necessity for keeping vigilant also the necessity of concealment from view. Afternoon conferred with Divisional HQ regarding the placing in position on the right of the Divisional flank (right of Brigade Reserve line) the two LEWIS guns of First Pioneer Battalion; allocated this unit for duty. Visited the OC of First Aust. M.G. Co also O.C of Third Aust. M.G. Co & exchanged dispositions of all our guns.</p>	
-d.-	19/4/17		<p>Inspected transport lines - found everything satisfactory. Afternoon AF, B 213. BEUSHY, a smashed up village near HQ of Company heavily shelled with 8" Howitzers in afternoon. No damage. Instructed the double sentries at night to always wear the small box respirator in the alert position no matter direction of wind - this step taken account of gas shells falling near our gun last night.</p>	
-d.-	20/4/17		<p>Morning visited every gun position in right sector including the two LEWIS guns which were dead found on our right. Lt Col HOARE MC Corps M.G. Officer visited HQ today but O.C was out round the line. Reported to Divisional HQ.</p>	

WAR DIARY

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~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.~~

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the field	21/4/17		<p>Stood by all day waiting instructions from Division reference new M.G positions in new CORPS MAIN LINE OF RESISTANCE - No instructions however were received. Made out revised lists of dispositions of all guns & sent one copy to DHO & others to 1st, 2nd, 3rd Aus. M.G. Companies, also 1st, 2nd & 3rd Australian Infantry Brigades.</p>	
do -	22/4/17		<p>Visited No. 1 Section who have four guns emplaced in vicinity of LAGNI COURT also visited Brigade Head Quarters of the Sector & the HQ of the Brigade M.G. Company in left sector (2nd Aus. M.G. Company)</p> <p>Twenty reinforcements received from Base today for this unit</p>	
do -	23/4/17		<p>Visited HQ of 2nd Aus. Inf. Bde reference leaving one section in the sector held by them as the Bde. M. G. Co have a section doing anti aircraft work in back areas.</p> <p>Visited THILLOY & conferred with 34th (Imperial) M. G. Co reference relief of Reserve line in BEAUMETZ - MORCHIES line tomorrow</p>	

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WAR DIARY

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~~INTELLIGENCE~~ SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the field	24 4 17.		<p>Relieved eight guns in right sector BEAUMETZ - MORCHIES Line by 34th (Imp) M G Co. Relief complete at 2000. No casualties.</p> <p>Received message from Divisional Head Quarters that N^o 394³²⁵ Pte ERBACHER L. & N^o 394 Pte COLBERT E.T. were awarded the Military Medal for gallantry in the field on the morning of heavy German attack of 15 April 1917.</p> <p>Received file from D.H.Q with reference to making M.G and LEWIS positions in right sector of BEAUMETZ - MORCHIES line. As relief was being arranged in morning and carried out in the afternoon unable to proceed with same.</p> <p>Handed all papers in above connection to 34th M.G. Company. Lt J. R. HORNIMAN evacuated sick.</p> <p>Head Quarters transport & Nos 2 & 4 Sections (relieved from right sector) marched to RIENCOURT - LES - BAPAUME & were accommodated in sheds there.</p>	

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WAR DIARY

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In the field	26 4 17		<p>Anniversary of landing at ANZAC. Gave men good rest, Paraded 10 AM. As Company have got a little slack through being in trenches carried out Company Drill & Rifle Exercises.</p> <p>Weather conditions very pleasant</p>	
do	26 4 17		<p>Visited No 1 Section who are in reserve positions covering LAGNICOURT, arranged for them to be relieved by No 4 Section tomorrow. No 1 heavily shelled today, casualties three other ranks. Two men died of wounds.</p> <p>Training of sections at RIENCOURT proceeded with -</p> <p>Sunny pleasant weather. Washed all limbers. Animals all well</p>	
do	27 4 17		<p>Gun Drill & Rifle Exercises - Unpacking & repaired limbers</p> <p>No 4 Section relieved, without incident, No 1 Section.</p>	

WAR DIARY

Army Form C. 2118

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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

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Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
In Heiried	28 4 17		Inspected the four LEWIS guns of PIONEER BN. attached to this unit & doing A. A. work. Found every thing correct. No conveniences exist at RIENCOURT - arranged that today & tomorrow be utilised for all men to have advantage of hot baths - also clothes washed & blankets aired. Received 21 reinforcements from M. G. Base FRANCE	
do	29 4 17		Visited No 4 Section. Made up account of Action on 15 April for G. S. 1st Aus. Div All men in Company now clean.	
do	30 4 17		Early morning parade - Doubling brisk marching. Morning carried out packing limbers & general clean up of area occupied by the unit. (Subsection of No 4 relieved by subsection of No 2 Company) Afternoon practice in night firing & laying guns on aiming posts etc. Lt BURBURY relieved 2/Lt N. BROWNING as Officer in charge of guns of this unit attached to 2nd AUS. INF. BDE	with results in 2nd Aus. M. G. Co.

A7092). Wt. W12839/M1297 750,000. 1/17. D. D & L., Ltd. Forms/C2118/14.

will be prepared in accordance with the 2nd Army Intelligence Summary and the 2nd Army Intelligence Summary. Instructions regarding Form Intelligence and Intelligence Summary are contained in A.S. 1000, Part II.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(General Analysis and Summary)

Summary of Events and Information

Event	Date	Place	Summary of Events and Information	References and Remarks
21st	21st	21st	<p><u>SECRET</u></p> <p><u>WAR</u> <u>DIARY</u></p> <p><u>APRIL 1917</u></p> <p>21ST AUS M G COMPANY</p> <p><u>attached</u></p>	

11/17

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